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- KELSO, R. W. *The history of public poor relief in Massachusetts, 1620-1920.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1922. Pp. 200. \$2.50.)
- KERBY, W. J. *The social mission of charity; a study of points of view in Catholic charities.* (New York: Macmillan. 1921. Pp. xv, 196.)
- SLINGERLAND, W. H. *Child welfare work in Colorado; a study of public and private agencies and institutions, and conditions of service, in the care of dependent, delinquent and defective children.* Extension series no. 43. (Boulder, Colo.: Univ. of Colorado. 1922. Pp. viii, 174.)
- SPRINGER, E. M. *Children deprived of parental care: a study of children taken under care by Delaware agencies and institutions.* Children's Bureau pub. no. 81. (Washington: Gov. Prtg. Office, Supt. Docs. 1921. Pp. 96.)
- WATSON, F. D. *The charity organization movement in the United States.* (New York: Macmillan. 1922. \$3.50.)

Socialism and Co-operative Enterprises

The Consumers' Coöperative Movement. By SYDNEY and BEATRICE WEBB. (London: Longmans, Green & Company. 1921. Pp. xv, 504. \$6.50.)

This most recent volume from the Webbs is by far the most complete and satisfactory statement yet made of what we understand by consumers' coöperation. It is the work of ardent, life-long friends of the movement, but there are warnings and admonitions in plenty, even criticism all the more severe because of the authors' outright championship of the cause.

In six long chapters—nearly 500 pages in all—we are given, first, enough historic detail to interpret later developments: the rise of federal institutions—wholesalers, banking, and insurance; the strife over the employees and their relation to consumers' administration; the hopeful yet disturbing issues arising from the war; remedial defects and shortcomings; and finally much acute speculation as to the future. Thirty years of intensive work on trade unions, coöperation, labor-copartnership and local government precede this final survey. No one should welcome it more than those who oppose socialism. Never has the socialist objective been outlined with more lucidity or with less compromising qualification. The authors maintain that consumers' coöperation is to supersede the capitalist system. This system is toppling as feudalism toppled and fell. Coöperation is to take production and distribution out of the hands of individual profit-makers. The private rent-receiver is to fare no better. We see thus why the authors so cleanly cut out labor copartnership, coöperative credit banks, together with producers' associations like those of Denmark and Sir Horace Plunkett. They do not undervalue these, but will not have them an integral part of the consumers' movement. This latter pro-

duces and distributes solely *for use*. We are told roundly and repeatedly that this motive must be under democratic direction without "the stimulus of pecuniary gain." The chapters are packed with what are believed to be solid proofs that this more disinterested motive has not only worked but is working with rapidly increasing efficiency.

In the entire exposition of this evidence there is an almost pitiless record of blunders, apathies and shortcomings—all the friction from overlapping and that between employees and those who manage stores and factories. The trade unions fighting for higher pay, better conditions, and a shorter day do not see eye to eye with employees interested first in cheapened products and the "divvy." That one section of labor is here pitted against those representing other sections of labor has become as painfully clear as in the outside capitalist world. Equally clear is the tendency everywhere to sag toward the old familiar method of the competitive system. In spite of efforts, a great deal of credit has still to be granted or trade goes elsewhere. Frequent strikes have occurred and more are threatened. The "melancholy fact" is noted that, as coöperation has grown, apathy toward every earlier ideal hangs like an incubus on the movement.

Too often "management committees"—together with the less energetic officials—"actually prefer an apathetic membership." "Agitators" here are as offensive as elsewhere.

These conceded laxities would be very deceptive if it were not added that the authors hold stoutly to the faith that, at every point, the evils are fewer and more easily removed than corresponding ones in capitalism. The relentless competition of the private profit-maker, we are told, drives the coöperator to most of these backslidings.

There is nothing better in the volume than the insistence that as coöperators are in neck-to-neck rivalry with capitalism, their only hope or justification is a distinctly superior service to the consuming public. Against capitalism "it has perpetually to compete for raw materials, for service of brain-workers and skilled operators, for customers and trade. Except in so far as it can effect a genuine improvement or economy of management" it should go to the wall. It is a fair challenge.

The real value rendered by the authors is in their abundant and detailed evidence of enormous growth both in mass and variety of services. No review of this length can give the least adequate account of the thoroughness and excellence which the Webbs have brought to this task.

The writer asked Lord Bryce before his recent departure from this country for an opinion on their works. He spoke with unqualified praise, ending "they are very able, very able."

JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS.